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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7104
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0862
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4422
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7953
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5514
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3483
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1302
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000067

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STATE FOR EAP AND IO; PACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: ACTIVISTS CHARGED, UNCLES CRITICISED

REF: A. 07 RANGOON 719

[1](#)B. 07 RANGOON 1136

Classified By: Pol Officer Sean O'Neill for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Zomi National Congress President Chin Sian Than informed us of increasing concerns within the pro-democracy movement over senior NLD leadership. A group of 92 MPs-elect are preparing a letter to the UNSYG calling for the inclusion of opposition and ethnic leaders in the constitutional drafting process. The MP's-elect have asked for the NLD leadership's support but are not optimistic they will give it. Ten detained 88 Generation Students leaders, including Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, were charged with violating provisions of a law governing the publication of written materials. If convicted, they could get as much as seven years in prison. End Summar.

[1](#)2. (C) In a January 28 meeting with Poloff, Zomi National Congress leader Chin Sian Thang discussed increasing misgivings within the pro-democracy movement over the NLD's senior leadership and their apparent lack of commitment to the opposition cause. He said that more and more, both ethnic minority and majority-Burman opposition activists thought the NLD Uncles were not listening to the wishes of the Burmese people or even to Aung San Suu Kyi. Specifically, he criticized the NLD Central Executive Committee's (CEC) failure to speak out more strongly in favor of including ethnic minorities in a tripartite dialogue with the government, as Aung San Suu Kyi has advocated (reftel B). While the NLD CEC has issued recent statements calling for national reconciliation, none of them have repeated Aung San Suu Kyi's call for the inclusion of ethnic groups in a three-way dialogue.

[1](#)3. (C) Chin Sian Thang informed Poloff that a group of 92 MPs-elect from a number of ethnic groups are preparing a letter urging UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to pressure the regime to include ethnic and opposition groups in the constitutional drafting process. A similar letter by the same group was sent in August 2007 (reftel A). While this group has asked the NLD CEC to openly support the statement, most of its members believed the Uncles would be "too timid" to do so, according to Chin Sian Thang. Nonetheless, he said the 92 MPs-elect have decided to give the NLD leadership

until Union Day on February 12 to sign on before sending the letter themselves.

14. (C) Opposition lawyer U Aung Thein confirmed that ten 88 Generation Students Leaders, who were arrested on August 22, including Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, were formally charged under Burma's Printers and Publishers Registration Law. According to the charges the group failed to register and clear their printed pro-democracy materials. Conviction under this law carries a maximum penalty of seven years. The other eight people charged under the law are Ko Jimmy, Mya Aye, Aung Thu, Min Zeya, Zaw Htet Ko Ko, Myo Aung Naing, and Ko Tin Htoo Aung. All ten have been in prison without charge since their arrests in August. Notably, Htay Kywe was not among those charged. He has yet to be charged, and some of our contacts speculated that his charges could be more severe.

15. (C) Comment. There is a reason Than Shwe has let the Uncles remain free, while he jails the rest of the opposition. The NLD Uncles' failure to vigorously pursue Aung San Suu Kyi's stated goal of a tripartite dialogue demonstrates their increasing disconnect from the desires of the Burmese people and their own party. The increasing criticism of the Uncles' leadership from within the pro-democracy movement demonstrates the divide between them and those in the movement who are ready to work for change now. End Comment.
VILLAROSA